

court, the atrocity of the principle behind them—a vast organization extending across the continent. Let our population be doubled and trebled; let political prizes be increased; let the attempt to bring on a war here between factions and a war there between sections of some secret organization be increased in virulence in proportion to the increase of the size of the prizes, and you can imagine that many a secret murder might occur, traceable to just such organizations. The death of Dr. Cronin was probably providential. The absolute infernality which lies in the principles that led to the murder of Dr. Cronin may grow to a serpent twining around our Republic as the serpent twined around the Laocoon of old. To undertake the task of seizing the serpent by the throat while he is young by the body politic, and social, and religious, and then hurling the viper back into the chaos where he belongs, is the means to be found of ridding our nation of such stains.

Many ministers have gone into secret organizations. Numbers of our best citizens are in them. I am not assailing any man's motive. The organization is one thing, but the men in it are another. There may be good men in it. I will endorse all that. I assail no individual's motives. I suppose there are a multitude of really excellent men in the different secret organizations of this country that really do not know the characters of the organizations or have not reflected on them, and if they find out the character after they joined it, sometimes they don't leave it for fear of trouble. Very often they do leave. There are very many secret organizations in this country with thoroughly good men in them who rarely attend the meetings, but pay their dues. Only about one out of five, they say, of the Freemasons is regular in attendance.

I am not classing the Freemasons with Clan-na-Gael people, because I believe they are on a much higher plane; but I shall have enough to say about them. Your Clan-na-Gael people have been proved to be dangerous to society. In view of some of their principles it is not improper to affirm that those who are loyal to such principles are disloyal to the Republic. I mean by a disloyal secret oath, an oath that is not authorized by the public law and that tramples on the authority of the state or of the church, or of both together. I maintain that a secret oath of that sort ought to be illegal, ought to be regarded by the church as reprehensible, as I shall show before I conclude; and as I may as well show at this moment.

THE VERMONT LAW.

The statutes of Vermont up to 1880—I suppose up to the present hour—made such oaths illegal. I am discussing Clan-na-Gaelism, and you will not think that Vermont is narrow or bigoted because she puts a penalty of \$50 or \$200 upon every secret oath not authorized by public law. Here, I say, is the red thread in the center of the cordage. Put an end to these illegal oaths and you put an end to all societies founded upon them. I confess with shame and confusion, Mr. Chairman, that although I was born in the State of Vermont, and lived inside of it almost all my days, I did not know until this week that Vermont has made secret oaths, not provided for by statute, illegal and punishable by fine, and so has actually uprooted all societies founded upon such oaths. In the Revised Statutes of Vermont as published here in the edition of 1880—a friend of mine very kindly obtained this law book for me this afternoon—is the following:

"A person who administers to another an oath or affirmation or obligation in the nature of an oath which is not required or authorized by law, or a person who voluntarily suffers such oath or obligation to be administered to him, or voluntarily takes the same, shall be fined not more than \$200 and not less than \$50; but this section shall not prohibit an oath or affidavit for the purpose of establishing a claim, petition or application by an individual or corporation administered without intentional secrecy [which shows that where secrecy is intentional the oath is illegal] by a person authorized to administer oaths, or an oath or affidavit for the verification of commercial papers, or documents relating to property or which may be required by a public officer or tribunal of the United States or of any State or any other country, nor abridge the authority of a magistrate."

That is the law of Vermont, and I beg you to notice that the penalty here has been doubled since 1833. You say the excitement at the time of the murder of Morgan naturally caused competition between politicians to catch the Anti-mason vote, and that in the swirl of public excitement Vermont was ready to pass this law. That law was originally passed in 1833. It passed the law first in that year, but the penalty was only \$100. In 1839, six years, or more after, Masonry had been superseded by anti-slavery as a topic of great prominence in politics. Vermont doubled the penalty, and here she has kept the penalty on her books forty years, \$200 the highest fine for taking an oath or administering an oath not provided for by the laws of the Commonwealth.

A SHARP SCYTHE FOR THE SWAMPS OF IMMORALITY.

Now, I maintain that in Mormonism, in Clan-na-Gaelism, and in Jesuitism, it is high time that

we carry that principle through all our States; and, in fact, Freemasonry also, if you please, for it would cut up Freemasonry. To use the admirable metaphor of the eloquent gentleman [Dr. Wallace] who has preceded me, there is a scythe that moves through the swamp of pestilential growth—I call it the keen blade of the Vermont Revised Statutes, and all I want to cut off the weeds of society is that law made universal. I brought to the platform a legal opinion from no less a man than Daniel Webster, when Massachusetts and New Hampshire had passed this law which is now in force in Vermont. It is astonishing what weight Webster would put into a few sentences, how a whole topic would be covered on its many sides by half a dozen of his judicious clauses:

"All secret associations, the members of which take upon themselves extraordinary obligations to one another and are bound together by secret oaths, are natural sources of jealousy and just alarm to others, and especially unfavorable to harmony and mutual confidence among men living together under public institutions, and are dangerous to the general cause of civil liberty and justice. Under the influence of this conviction I heartily approve the law lately enacted in the State of which I am a citizen [that is Massachusetts] for abolishing all such oaths and obligations."

So that Webster, according to that, would justify this Vermont law; and all I stand for here to-night is just that principle in its entire natural application. And if Webster was a fanatic; if these legislators of Vermont were fanatics, then we are fanatics for justifying this central principle.

I now come to Jesuitism, and I beg leave to say that I do not wish to attack any man's religion. I would speak of Roman Catholicism as a religion with all due respect. I am not here to discuss that topic to-night. But Roman Catholicism as a polity is another matter. Political Romanism is under the management of an oath-bound secret organization called the Jesuit body. Now, as cool an authority as the Encyclopædia Britannica says that Jesuitism, as a secret oath bound body, is a naked sword with its hilt at Rome and its point everywhere. That sword has been drawn of late for the destruction of the American common school system. Our Republic rests its chief weight on a tripod of which the chief supports are a free church, a free school, a free state. The tripod is of such a nature that when you break either of the supports the whole tumbles. Now, it is beyond controversy that the arm of the most powerful of ecclesiastical organizations known to history is lifted with that Jesuit sword in its hand for the purpose of cutting to pieces the priceless, historically-tested, absolutely invaluable American common school system. I say, paralyzed be the arm that is lifted for such a purpose!

(To be Continued.)

Reflex Action.

Prof. J. C. Wood of Philadelphia, in the *Century Magazine* for March, has a very interesting article on *memory*. He points out how after many times doing the same thing in the same way, one falls into the "habit" of doing it so, and the control of the brain is not needed. Indeed the higher centers involving consciousness, etc. may be destroyed or held in abeyance by injury or disease, and the habitual actions be continued as formerly. This is possible by means of a certain function physiologists have termed *reflex action*. The centers having become entirely habituated by frequent performances the mechanism of the action becomes so imbedded, as it were, upon the cell structure of the brain, that the individual does the same thing over and over again without really knowing he does it.

This brings up a train of reflections at once significant and appalling. It impresses us with the tremendous importance of being careful as to what impressions we make upon the gray matter of our own nerve centers. It at once brings out with unwanted strength of outline the fact that every thought, word and action may leave its stamp upon our own minds; may start an impression on the sensitive plate of your own brains which, though imperceptible at first, may, by constant exposure, like other sensitive plates to the light of far off and indistinct stars, result in such a stamping of an impression on our brains as we may never get shut of, except by the strong might of Jehovah.

To illustrate: I get into the habit of exaggerating; everything I tell is colored in brighter and more marked shades than the facts warrant. It may not reach the extent of a real untruth, and yet the impression given is a false one. I continue this thing for a longer or shorter time, as the case may be, and at last by the force of habit (which is only a common expression for reflex action), I can not tell a plain uncolored story. Like the man who told the lie so long he believed it himself, I am

a victim of my own exaggeration and don't really know it.

The worst phase of it is that by the law of inheritance, any progeny may after that have their brains warped in this way. This one thing of exaggeration is only an example of others whose name is legion. Anything which may influence a man's life, may act in the same way. Swearing, drinking, smoking, cheating, stealing, praying, doing good in any way at all, each has the power so to influence our lives that by constant recurrences they leave such impressions on the moral centers as shall compel us to do these things without our consciousness. It is just the power of reflex action that makes it at times difficult to do right. "When I would do good evil is present." By constant inheritance of this tendency, and by cultivating it in our own persons, we find we are constantly at enmity toward God as the carnal mind always is.

Reader, just please turn over in your own mind, what is your "besetting sin"? What gives you most spiritual conflicts? Is it something which you have only done once or twice, or is it not rather something you have done so often as to have established a habit? The thing really does itself by this reflex action. What are these things which come easiest in your spiritual life? Are they not those which you have done so often you need barely think about them? Praying, singing, teaching, talking Jesus, thinking no evil, doing good to all around you? Just turn over this list. Which is the hardest? Can't you pray in public? Then you can just set it down as absolutely certain that you have not yet established that habit. Can't you stand up for Jesus? Just begin saying by God's help I'll do it, and soon the reflex action will be at work, and you will be unconscious by defending the cause of the Master in word and deed, before all men. Are you disposed to be suspicious of men, especially those whom you have reason to know are shaky? Just try to find all that is good in them, and soon this habit will fasten itself on you, and you will unconsciously have acquired that love that "thinketh no evil." Is our besetting sin an ungovernable temper? Then we can just be sure we have never governed our tempers. We have to "work out our own salvation," not by obeying certain doctrinal dogmas simply and only, but by moulding and shaping our lives after that of our great Exemplar, who did good just because he could not help it. He was so full of goodness that unconsciously he did good and did not know it, until after it was done, as in the case of the woman who touched him and was healed.

Oh scatter seeds of loving deeds,
Along the fertile field;
For grain will grow from what you sow,
And God will fruitage yield.

To grow in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," about which we have all heard so much, is simply to establish the habit of being Christ-like—the reflex action of doing good. Let us each be very careful what we do for our own sakes as well as for the sakes of others. No man or woman can afford to think, say or do, any hard or mean thing about anyone. Action and reaction are equal and opposed to each other. Just as badly as you think of another one just that bad you have started to make yourself. The image you have in your own brain, will effect that brain to an appreciable extent. By repeating this impression you will finally have your brain distorted by a series of ugly, misshapen creatures, which will assert themselves in controlling your actions, and you will not know it. It is terrible to think what an unkind word or thought even may have upon ourselves. There is no safety for us except in Jesus: moulding your thoughts after his, and shaping your actions by his. "Be ye holy," says Jesus. This must be our aim, and every good deed and word "in his name," only tends to strengthen the impressions on our moral centers, and helps hasten the time when our reflex doing good will have been established.

For the sake of our unborn children, we should be pure and establish holy reflexes. Inheritance may do much more than we think. The peculiar thing about John the Baptist was his being full of the Holy Ghost from birth. The direct cause, I take it, was his parents both being "righteous before God." May not our children be so if we get all sin out of ourselves, and be pure and righteous before God. Let us think of these things and ask God's spirit to enlighten us. Don't condemn in your own wisdom, but if the spirit of God condemns I shall say *amen*.

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Self-knowledge is that acquaintance with ourselves which shows us what we are, and what we ought to be, in order to our living comfortably and usefully here, and happily hereafter.